



Town of
Westford
Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

July 2013



Jodi Ross,
Town
Manager

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Dear Westford residents,

At their July 9th Board of Selectmen meeting, the board thanked Bob Jefferies for his 35 years of service for our town. Bob began volunteering on the Historical Commission in 1978, moved to the Planning Board, and then later became a Selectman in 1998.

On June 20th we held our 3rd annual Strategic Planning Retreat at Kimball Farm. It was a beautiful summer evening with 107 residents attending. We will be updating our website on what was learned and how we plan to move forward with recommendations made. Please check out this link for further information: [Strategic Planning Retreat](#).

On June 26th our State Representative Jim Arciero, members of our Economic Development Committee, and I submitted an application to the state Economic Assistance Coordinating Council for Westford to be designated as a member of the 495 Regional Technology Economic Target Area (ETA). We were successful in receiving this designation which would allow businesses choosing to relocate or expand in our town to be considered for state and local tax incentives. Also, being an ETA allows our town or property owners to apply for Brownfield's grants which could help offset costs related to the cleanup of contaminated properties.

In response to a resolution at our Annual Town Meeting, the Selectmen recently established an EBC/Stepinski Parcels Naming Study Committee which is being charged with conducting a town-wide survey to determine whether or not the majority of Westford respondents support merging these two parcels under a common name. More information may be found at the following link: [EBC/Stepinski Parcels Naming Study Committee](#).

The Permanent Town Building Committee has recommended that the town build a new Center Fire Station on Boston Road, on a town-owned parcel located across from Drew's garden center (formerly Eric's.) We are seeking Town Counsel opinion about the usability of this site, and investigating the plausibility of adding a light to aid the fire trucks and ambulance in exiting the station. The committee does not recommend building a new satellite station in Parker Village at this time.

The 9/11 Memorial Committee broke ground this week to construct a 6 foot tall memorial structure in the courtyard of the Police, Fire and Town Hall to commemorate those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. Thank you to all of the committee members for their efforts. The structure is architecturally unique, designed by Firefighter Christiana and will feature the last names of the 92 Massachusetts residents who lost their lives on that tragic day.

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross



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Conservation Department News

NASHOBA VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMPLETE MAJOR ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPGRADE AT EAST BOSTON CAMPS

The staff and students of the Nashoba Valley Technical High School have been of great assistance to the town in their efforts through their community service program in helping to renovate the facilities at East Boston Camps, assuring they will be available for the many groups that use them for years to come. Recently a group of students from the Electrical Technology Program, guided by Electrical Technology Instructor Victor Vaitkunas and Master Electrician Kevin McDermott completed an extensive project at buildings at the Day Camp portion of the property. This area is now used mainly by the Recreation Department for their summer day programs. According to Caretaker George Fletcher there has been virtually little work on the electrical system in this part of the camps since its original installation in the 1930's. The students have completed a complete renovation, installing new wiring and fixtures to address safety issues and meet current code standards. They have also installed disconnect switches to allow for shut down of portions of the camps to allow for future maintenance work. Previously it had been necessary to make arrangements with National Grid to shut down power to the camps. The students also completed the renovation of the electrical system at the Duplex building at the Boys Camp. Students who worked on the renovations include: Liam Kilbride, Muaau Pau, Ben Hoenshell, Ryan Hopkins, Chuck Henckler, Nate Cole, Tom Chebuske, Jake Hunt, and Adam Brown.



The Conservation Commission, on behalf of the town, wishes to express its deep gratitude to Nashoba Valley Technical High School faculty and students for their significant contributions to restoration of the camps.

Health Department News

Self Defense Class Offered To Town Employees

As part of the employee wellness program, Progressive Defense Systems provided a course in non-violent self defense. This course developed by a police officer for other first responders was geared specifically for occupations in public service.



Water Department News

The Water Department has been busy replacing old fire hydrants in select areas of Forge Village. Some of these hydrants date back to the early 20th century and were part of the original Westford Water Company system. Although a pleasant reminder of simpler times, these older hydrants don't provide the fire protection of the newer hydrants, and need to be replaced. So far, 4 hydrants have been replaced with 6 more scheduled for completion this year.



A new Clow fire hydrant with 4" pumper cap

The older hydrants – sometimes referred to as “2-spudders” only have two 2.5” ports for attaching a hose. Additionally, they have smaller 4” barrels. The replacement hydrants, manufactured by Clow Valve Company, come with the two 2.5” ports and a 4.5” pumper cap to allow hook up to a fire tanker truck. The Clows also come with a larger 6” barrel – which provides more water for improved fire-fighting capabilities. As an added benefit, we install isolation gates to allow us to make future hydrant repairs without having to shut off water service.

As expected – we have to shut the local water main down to replace the hydrants – resulting in temporary loss of service to area customers. Affected customers are notified by letter several days in advance of hydrant replacement work. We realize this can be an inconvenience, and appreciate your patience while the work is performed. The benefit of improved fire protection in the area is considerable.



A recently-retired “2-spudder” Ludlow hydrant

A little bit of hydrant trivia...

Ever wonder where the term “fireplug” comes from? Before water mains were constructed from iron and cement – hollowed-out logs were commonly used to transport water. When a quick source of water was needed to fight a fire, the firefighters would dig down to the wooden main and drill a hole in it to create a temporary pool of water to use either for a bucket brigade or to pump. Once the fire was out – the temporary hole would be plugged with a piece of wood. These wooden stoppers became known as fireplugs. Many times the location would be marked so it could be used in the future.



A section of old wooden water main. Note the fireplug to the left.

J. V. Fletcher Library News

“Databases” are not scary!

You're having your morning coffee at your kitchen table wishing that the Library was open at 7am because you are in the mood “right now” to look up toddler car seat ratings in “Consumer Reports”.

You're a person who can fix anything, especially cars, and you need a step by step diagram to work from in your garage.

You are thinking about putting some of your antiques on eBay, but you would really like to know what your bottom line asking price should be.

Like Dorothy, who thought she had to travel to the Emerald City to find her heart's desire, you too can find (Consumer Reports ratings, a Car Repair Guide and an Antiques' pricing guide) if not in your own backyard, then inside your home on your own computer.

But first you have to get over your wariness when you see the word “databases.” Think of a database as just another Library collection, an online one; and instead of grouping books together by genre, they are grouped together by topics and like-subjects.

Next, go to the Library's online home page at www.westfordlibrary.org, or open the Library's mobile app on your tablet or smartphone, and choose “Databases” from the menu on the left hand side of the page.



Taa daa, if you browse through the alphabetical listing you'll find “**Consumer Reports**,” The Auto Repair Reference Center,” (with step-by-step directions and diagrams that you can print out) and a new database that we just subscribed to called, “**Price it! Antiques and Collectibles**.” Just type in your Library Card Number and you can start browsing, reading and printing.

There are SO MANY fascinating, educational and recreational databases to explore. I invite you to check them out!

[GENERAL RESEARCH](#) | [ANTIQUES](#) | [AUTO REPAIR](#) | [BOOKS AND LITERARY CRITICISM](#)
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Strategic Planning Retreat held June 20, 2013



The purpose for this retreat is to support and engage in an annual Strategic Planning Retreat devoted to town-wide policy identification, prioritization, discussion and development with standing boards, committees, management staff, and residents at large. This year's Retreat covered issues of economic development, education, town financial topics, emergency planning/response and town/school building security. For more information please visit:

www.westfordma.gov/retreat

